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## HOUSE TO HOUSE INSPECTIONS

BY A. PRESCOTT FOLWELL

Among the subjects suggested for discussion at the experience meeting of this convention was that of house to house inspections, how often they should be made, and whether they should be continuous by a small regular force, or whether general periodic inspections should be made. As a contribution to this discussion, the writer is able to give some information as to present practices in more than 350 plants, of which 276 are municipal plants and the balance private plants. This information he obtained within the past month by direct correspondence with these cities, in connection with other data which he was obtaining.

Taking first the 276 municipal plants, we find 38 of these reporting that inspectors are kept continuously at work making these house to house inspections; 228 report periodic inspections, and 10 report that no inspections are made.

In a great many cases no information further than this was given, but a number of the superintendents gave particulars concerning the carrying on of this work. One Massachusetts city reported using six inspectors continuously for reading meters and inspecting house plumbing, while another smaller place kept one man at this work. St. Louis reports 35 men continuously inspecting house plumbing; Canton, Ohio, two regular men with an extra man occasionally, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, two inspectors continuously.

Of the periodic inspections, the interval was stated to be once a month in the case of Key West, Florida; Salem, Illinois; Cherryvale, Kansas; Cambridge, Clinton and Taunton, Massachusetts; Cloquet and Duluth, Minnesota; Fairbury, Nebraska; Grand Forks, North Dakota; Davis, Oklahoma; Bay City, Texas; Charlottesville, Virginia, and Bellingham, Washington; a total of 14 cities.

Quarterly inspections are reported by Fort Dodge, Iowa; Belmont, Massachusetts; Pipestone and St. Peter, Minnesota; Farmington, Missouri; University Place, Nebraska; Dover, New Jersey; Peekskill, and Watkins, New York; East Cleveland, Medina and Read-

ing, Ohio; East Providence, Rhode Island; Huron, South Dakota; Pullman, Washington; Sistersville, West Virginia; Fort Atkinson and Marshfield, Wisconsin; a total of 18.

Inspections twice a year are reported by Waterbury, Connecticut; Marquoketa, Iowa; Winfield, Kansas; Winthrop, Massachusetts; Lestershire and Whitehall, New York; Brownwood, Texas, and Fairmont, West Virginia; a total of 8.

Annual inspections are made by Whittier, California; Greeley and Silverton, Colorado; St. Petersburg, Florida; Blue Island, Illinois; Chestertown, Maryland; Andover, Natick, and New Bedford, Massachusetts; Fulton, Missouri; Keene, New Hampshire; Cape May, New Jersey; Hoosick Falls and Newark, New York; Medford, Oregon; Brookville and McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and Ephraim, Utah; a total of 18.

Among other intervals named are once in two years by Boyne City, Michigan; Auburn and Salamanca, New York; Bradford and Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.

Providence, Rhode Island, makes an inspection every three years, when the annual rates are changed.

Practically all of those which report no inspection give as a reason that this is not necessary because the services are metered, while a number of others report that metered properties are not inspected, but only those on flat rates. Still others report that the periodic inspections are made by the meter reader when reading the meter, and there may be question as to whether this means an inspection of the entire premises or only of the meter and its connections.

The above shows that at least 64 of the 228 which have periodic inspections make these at stated intervals; and it is extremely probable that a considerable proportion of the others also have a regular schedule for this work. A number of the cities, however, report that such inspections are made "occasionally," "on request," "infrequently," etc.

Of the 77 private plants, 10 report continuous inspection by a permanently employed force, while 67 report periodic inspections. Monthly inspections are reported by 3 superintendents, quarterly inspections by 1, annual inspections by 7, biennial by 2, and once in five years by 1. Six report inspection "occasionally," 1 "frequently," and 1 "when complaint is made."

It might be of interest and possibly of some significance to state that these figures are taken from something over 500 reports made

by water works superintendents to a set of questions which had been submitted to them, and that a little over 30 per cent made no reply to the question at all. It would probably be fair to infer that a considerable percentage of these did not make any inspections, either continuously or periodically. If we assume this to be true of half of those who failed to report, we have about 45 cities out of 525, or between 8 and 9 per cent, which make no inspections, a smaller percentage than the writer would have supposed in the absence of any data.